

Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An emergency evacuation apparatus (~~10~~) for use with an adjustable bed and for removing a bed-ridden person (~~P~~) from the adjustable bed in an emergency situation, comprising a base tray (~~11~~) having ~~at least one~~ three transverse fold lines (~~12~~) to allow the base tray (~~11~~) to bend as ~~two or more~~ four panels (~~13~~) defining a backrest, an intermediate panel and a knee-break, the base tray (~~11~~) being adapted to stay on top of the adjustable bed and bend along the ~~at least one~~ transverse fold lines (~~12~~) when the profile of the adjustable bed is changed during normal use; and mechanical locking means (~~20~~) operable between an unlocked condition in which the base tray (~~11~~) is able to bend along the transverse fold lines (~~12~~) and a locked condition in which the base tray (~~11~~) is unable to bend along the transverse fold lines (~~12~~) and to provide the base tray (~~11~~) with sufficient longitudinal rigidity to support the weight of an adult person.
2. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (~~10~~) according to claim 1, wherein the mechanical locking means ~~is~~ comprises at least one ~~or more~~ rigid locking bolt bolts (~~20~~).
3. (Canceled)
4. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (~~10~~) according to ~~any-~~ preceding claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ an underside of the base tray (~~11~~) is provided with wheels (~~17~~), glide members, roller balls or castors to facilitate its movement over the floor.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~At~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (~~10~~) according to claim 4, wherein the wheels (~~17~~), glide members, roller balls or castors are fitted in channels on the underside of the base tray (~~11~~).
6. (Currently Amended) ~~At~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (~~10~~) according to claim 4 ~~or claim 5~~, further comprising u-shaped runners (~~16~~) fixed to the underside of the base tray (~~11~~) into which the wheels (~~17~~), glide members, roller balls or castors are fitted.
7. (Currently Amended) ~~At~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (~~10~~) according to ~~any~~ ~~preceding~~ claim 1, further comprising straps (~~21~~) secured to the base tray (~~11~~) for wrapping around the person (~~P~~) in an emergency situation to restrain the person (~~P~~).
8. (Currently Amended) ~~At~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (~~10~~) according to claim 7, wherein the straps (~~21~~) are provided with snap-fit couplings which permit ~~them~~ the straps to be connected together to encircle the person (~~P~~) prior to tightening ~~them~~ the straps.
9. (Currently Amended) ~~At~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (~~10~~) according to claim 7 ~~or claim 8~~, wherein the base tray (~~11~~) has two longitudinal folds lines (~~14a~~, ~~14b~~) defining a central panel (~~15a~~) for supporting the person (~~P~~) and two side panels (~~15b~~, ~~15c~~) that can be bent out of the plane of the central panel (~~15a~~) by the straps (~~21~~).
10. (Currently Amended) ~~At~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (~~10~~) according to ~~any~~ ~~preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the base tray (~~11~~) is made of polypropylene.
11. (Currently Amended) ~~At~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (~~10~~) according to ~~any~~ ~~preceding~~ claim 9, wherein the transverse and longitudinal fold lines (~~12~~, ~~14~~) are hydraulically pressed into the base tray (~~11~~).

12. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (+0) according to ~~any~~ preceding claim 1, further comprising carrying handles secured to the sides of the base tray (+1).

13. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (+0) according to ~~any~~ preceding claim 1, further comprising at least one strip ~~or more strips~~ of foam (+8) fixed to the an underside of the base tray (+1).

14. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A combination of an adjustable bed having a plurality of panels (2) that can bend relative to each other and an emergency evacuation apparatus (+0) for removing a bed-ridden person from the adjustable bed in an emergency situation, the emergency evacuation apparatus (+0) comprising a base tray (+1) having a plurality of transverse fold lines (+2) to allow the base tray (+1) to bend as a plurality of panels (+3); and mechanical locking means (20) operable between an unlocked condition in which the base tray (+1) is able to bend along the transverse fold lines (+2) in register with the underlying panels (2) of the adjustable bed and a locked condition in which the base tray (+1) is unable to bend along the transverse fold lines (+2) and to provide the base tray (+1) with sufficient longitudinal rigidity to support the weight of an adult person.

15. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The combination of ~~an~~ the adjustable bed and ~~an~~ the emergency evacuation apparatus (+0) according to claim 14, wherein the base tray (+1) and the adjustable bed have the same number of panels (2, +3).

16. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The combination of ~~an~~ the adjustable bed and ~~an~~ the emergency evacuation apparatus (+0) according to claim 14 ~~or claim 15~~, wherein the base tray (+1) has substantially the same width as the adjustable bed.

17. (Currently Amended) ~~A combination of an adjustable bed and an~~ The emergency evacuation apparatus (+0) according to claim 6 in combination with the adjustable bed, wherein a tail-board (4) of the adjustable bed includes rollers (5) or fixed projections for engagement with the runners (+7) fixed to the underside of the base tray (+1) to assist in the removal of the emergency evacuation apparatus (+0) from the adjustable bed.

18. (Currently Amended) A method of evacuating a bed-ridden person from an adjustable bed having a plurality of panels (2) that can bend relative to each other using an emergency evacuation apparatus (40) ~~according to any of claims 1 to 13~~, comprising the steps of:

operating the adjustable bed with ~~the~~ a mechanical locking means (20) in ~~the~~ an unlocked ~~condition~~ position;

bending so that the panels (13) of ~~the~~ a base tray (11) ~~bend~~ along the transverse fold lines (12) in register with ~~the~~ underlying panels (2) of the adjustable bed until the panels (13) of the base tray (11) lie in the same plane or at a predetermined angle to each other [[,]] ; and

operating the mechanical locking means (20) from the unlocked ~~condition~~ position to ~~the~~ a locked ~~condition~~ position so that the base tray (11) is unable to bend along the transverse fold lines (12) ~~and to provide~~ providing the base tray (11) with sufficient longitudinal rigidity to support the weight of an adult person.